



Belton Library welcomes new mural



BELTON JOURNAL/Harvey Jackson Oss
Leadership Belton Class of 2026 stands with Chamber President Randy Pittenger and Library Director Amanda Hairston in front of the new mural.

By Harvey Jackson Oss
The Belton Journal

On Thursday, May 28, Leadership Belton 2026 oversaw the completion of their community project, a new mural on the Lena Armstrong Public Library.

Round Rock based muralists Jay and Riki Rivera of Laced and Found put the finishing touches on their work shortly after 10 a.m. The pair used spray paint and a boom lift to bring the wall to life. The Riveras have been painting murals professionally for the past decade, with well over 500 works completed across the country and multiple in Belton.

Leadership Belton provided

their ideas for the mural to Laced and Found who created the final design.

“It was a big collaborative effort between us,” said Jay.

“Leadership Belton approached us to see if we could use the library wall as a mural. I love the idea,” said Director of Library Services Amanda Hairston. “I think people will really notice the mural...they’ll want to talk about it, and I think it will bring us new patrons, so we’re really excited about it.”

Belton Area Chamber of Commerce President Randy Pittenger spoke to the attendees of the mural community day, explaining what Leadership Belton is.

“It’s an opportunity for people

to spend almost a year learning about our community, getting a behind the scenes look... and establishing a launching pad for community service in future years.”

The participants of Leadership Belton complete a project annually and are put in charge of making decisions and raising the necessary funds. Pittenger introduced Leadership Belton participant Dani Patterson of TopSarge Solutions to speak.

Patterson commented on the National Parks inspired design elements of the mural.

“If you look closely, you’ll notice the stickers. Like a traveler col-

See **MURAL**,
Page A2



Courtesy Photo

Miss SPJST Paetyn Beckendorf meets a student who directly benefits from her food delivery to The Source, Ayla Book.

Riesel student delivers 80 pounds of food to UMHB’s food pantry

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Miss SPJST Paetyn Beckendorf is on a mission to bring food to food pantries across Texas. Winning the honor to wear the Mss SPJST crown, she is logging hours, reporting her progress, and has delivered over 27,000 pounds of food since July 2025.

17 years old, Beckendorf said she officially became a senior in Riesel ISD when classes ended in May.

Beckendorf’s service project is called Czech Off Hunger, bringing her to UMHB’s pantry, The Source. However, her discovery was not due to her project but researching UMHB as a college she’s interested in attending.

“UMHB is an option for college. I wanted to help somewhere where I could go in the future,” said Beckendorf.

While delivering the food with the

help of family, Beckendorf met a student who uses The Source.

Beckendorf said, “It was amazing meeting somebody who was using what I was donating. She thanked me for putting in my time, my effort to help The Source. That was a great experience. It made me want to help even more.”

Since taking the Miss SPJST crown in July 2025, she has provided over 27,000 pounds of food to food banks across the state of Texas.

Beckendorf said, “In the National Junior Honor Society, we went to the Five Loaves and Two Fish Food Pantry in Riesel. We volunteered our time to make boxes and pass out food to families. I continued donating and volunteering after I moved into the National Honor Society. When I won my crown, I knew that’s what I wanted to do, because that’s what I’ve always known,

See **PANTRY**,
Page A2

The Belton Journal receives historical business award

By Susan Kolodziejczyk
The Belton Journal

The Belton Journal was recently recognized with a Texas Treasure Business Award from the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The Texas Treasure Business Award (TTBA) program is an initiative of the Community Heritage Division. Created in 2005 by Senate Bill 920, authored by Sen. Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio and sponsored by Rep. Charles “Doc” Anderson of Waco, the program pays tribute to the state’s well-established businesses and their exceptional historical contributions to communities across Texas.

“This is a recognition for the entire community. It has been a pleasure serving the community all these years. The award recognizes the community’s support for 160 years. I would not do anything else for a living. Every day is a reward,” said Publisher David Tuma.

Since 2005, over 500 Texas businesses have been honored for their historic significance, from well-known establishments like H.E.B. and Bill Miller BBQ to small town bakeries, florists, general stores, and many more.

A special decal identifying the business as a Texas Treasure is proudly displayed at the Journal, along with their award certificate that includes signatures from Texas Senator Pete Flores and Representative Hillary Hickland. Consumers will know when they spot the familiar Texas Treasure Business icon that they are doing business with a well-established, Texas-owned-and-operated business that has long contributed to job growth, stimulated the local economy, and generated state and local tax revenues.

The Belton Journal was nominated by a local resident with the help of Bell County Historical Commission Chair, Daniel Elder, back in November 2025. The history of the Journal and its long-standing commitment to sharing local

community news stories were part of the submission that gained them this award. Elder noted that “The Belton Journal’s origin story comes from a newspaper-exchange notice published in Austin on January 17, 1867. Credit goes to the paper’s original founders, Jouett H. Davenport and stepson James T. Longino, the previous year, which enabled the Journal to create a lasting legacy that has transcended time.”

“The Belton Journal is a deep part of the community of Belton. So, to those who read the paper each week and support the paper through advertising, I want to say thank you from all the current 14 employees and those employees from the past,” said Tuma.

The award is given to businesses that have been in continuous for-profit operation in the State of Texas for at least 50 years. Any business that has continued in operation without substantial interruption qualifies for the award. Businesses that change ownership or location may still qualify for the award, provided they have been continuously operated and owned as an independent business in Texas.

For more information about the Texas Treasure Business Award, contact the THC at 512-463-3893 or visit www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-treasure-business-award.



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Groundbreaking at Belton Industrial Park set for Thursday



Courtesy graphic

A rendering shows the expansion of BELLTEC, with a groundbreaking ceremony planned for next week in Belton’s Industrial Park.

Special to the Journal

BELLTEC announced a groundbreaking ceremony on June 11th in the Belton Industrial Park at 9 a.m.

The expansion is 34,880 square feet with an estimated cost of \$10 million. The current facility is 32,000 square feet. The expansion is for a powder coat facility.

“This expansion will

increase the flow of product we produce. It should increase our output by 200 percent by reducing our time for painting our products,” said Christopher Young, Plant Manager. “The paint product will look better and last longer.”

David Jones, Chairman of BELLTEC, said planning for the expansion

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Troy Ashford
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BCYC to host 8th annual reverse raffle

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Belton Christian Youth Center is holding its 8th annual reverse raffle with live music, a 50/50 raffle, and silent auction on Saturday, June 13.

The fundraiser provides 20 percent of BCYC's annual budget, and each ticket purchased includes dinner for two.

Daniel Bucher, executive director, said for BCYC's reverse raffle, Beau Heitmiller, from Belton, will sing and play guitar at the event, held this year at Johnny's Steaks & Bar-Be-Que in Salado.

"Dinner will be chicken fried steak, green beans, mashed potatoes, rolls, and tea. We're bringing a snow cone trailer for dessert," said Bucher.

He said they're changing up the vibe a little by holding it at Johnny's Steaks & Bar-Be-Que. With the casual setting, guests will be able to stay cool wearing t-shirts and shorts if they choose.

Discussing the silent raffle, Bucher said, "We'll have trips and beach houses and gift card packages and some other artwork and memorabilia."

The top prize is a 2026 Chevrolet Silverado from Don Ringler Chevrolet.

Doors open at 5:30 pm, dinner is served at 6 pm, and the drawing begins at 7 pm.

The annual reverse raffle creates a fun way for the community to support BCYC by providing affordable after-school care.

This is their largest fundraiser of the year, and it funds their summer camp program.

In the summer they have 340 kids enrolled, 29 staff, and daily field trips. The money raised also provides partial scholarship programs for some students.

300 tickets are for sale at \$175 each and can be purchased online where a processing fee is applied at beltonyouth.com/reverse-raffle/.



Courtesy Photo

The 2025 BCYC reverse raffle winners, Alecia Williams and Stanley Durbin stand by their prize.

Another way to purchase tickets is directly from one of the BCYC board of directors or to stop by the BCYC office during their office hours, which are listed on the same webpage.

Bucher said BCYC is a licensed child care center follow-

ing all the minimum standards, staffing ratios, and background checks.

Bucher said, "We just got United Way funding this year for the first time, in probably over a decade. We're trying to grow and take care of kids the

best we can and be a lifeline for working families to have affordable childcare. That's why we rely heavily on donors, community partners, and fundraisers."

To find out more about the BCYC Reverse Raffle, go to beltonyouth.com/reverse-raffle/.

Pantry - From Page A1

what I've always loved doing."

Fellow students in the Riesel ISD were told about the food drive for The Source through flyers and a student app.

"We put together a flyer that I posted around the school that I put on the boxes of donations," Beckendorf said. "My principals sent out that flyer on Student Square. It's an app that we use at our school to get in touch with parents of students and the students."

For her project, Beckendorf said she is focusing on pantries that need assistance.

"When I was going to Floresville, I looked up food pantries that were needing assistance and could use the help that I can provide in that area. That's how I found them."

Beckendorf has plans when her project, Czech Off Hunger, ends.

"I'm planning to continue helping those with food insecurity throughout Texas, even after I've completed my reign as Miss SPJST," said Beckendorf.

She wanted to thank all the

people who have helped with the project and those who will help others with food insecurity in the future. She also invites people to follow her blog, where she writes about her ongoing project and ways to help hunger at spjst.org/miss/.

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BELLTEC - From Page A1

began around six years ago.

"Powder coating is state of the art. We hang every piece of equipment we paint right now. This will be an automated paint system. It will increase our production time," he said. "This is a high-quality paint and drying system

we are installing. The employees are the reason we can do this expansion. We work hard to have the right people in the right positions. As you grow, you must increase the abilities of your employees. We get to know them personally. We have been extremely fortunate."

Young started as a welder and worked his way up in the company.

"It is a family-owned business. They come out and (owners) shake your hand, know your name. I feel valued as an employee from the beginning. The company is active in the community. They get out and volunteer. I love that. They have been very good

to me."

Imelda Vriseno, Inside Sales, said the passion of those inside the building is "special."

"It is a family-oriented business with teamwork. The expansion will help reduce the turnaround time. When we get calls at times, they are digging tomorrow, and they want the product today."

BELLTEC traces its roots to earlyday ingenuity and family-built business practices. Over 90 years of innovation—from Glen Jones's haystackers to today's advanced hydraulic augers BELLTEC delivers dependable, efficient drilling tools for any challenge.

Jones left the Iowa

farm to open a hardware and implement store, later founding New Method Equipment Co., where he developed the Haymaster haystacker. He also launched Continental Farm Machine Co. in Minneapolis, producing a patented tractor-mounted posthole digger with depthcontrol mechanisms.

In 1947, operations shifted to Belton, Texas, as Continental Belton Co., managed by Glen's son, Clyde Jones, and included tractor-mounted loaders. The product line grew to include sprayers, stalk shredders, and agricultural implements.

Jones departed to form Mohawk Equipment Co.,

expanding into rotary cutters and tillage tools. By the mid1980s, both Continental and Mohawk were sold off but remained industry fixtures.

Clyde, joined by his sons Donny and David, established BELLTEC Industries in Belton. Their first product—a patented down-pressure posthole digger—quickly builds the brand's reputation.

BELLTEC expanded its product range to include hydraulic auger drives, auger bits, and rockdrilling equipment, solidifying its reputation in the farming, construction, and utility sectors.

Mural - From Page A1

lecting memories across a lifetime, each sticker represents places, moments, people, and experiences that leave their mark."

She recognized her fellow Leadership Belton team members Bob Massey of Hybrid Leadership, Yolanda Ortiz of Alliance Bank, Lorenzo Reyes of Temple College, Adam Fulton of Finney Insurance, and John Ciaburri of Ciaburri Brand.

She also thanked mentor Meredith Duke of Duke Realty, Assistant City Manager Matt Bates, and Friends of the Library President Juanita Smith. Donors included TopSarge Busi-

ness Solutions, Finney Insurance, Carlson Law Firm, Trim & Tonic, Moore Air, Alliance Bank, VFW Post 4008, KPA, UMHB, West Temple Orthodontics, CRW, Emerson Construction, and Ciaburri Brand.

"You helped create something that will welcome families, inspire readers, and become part of Belton's story for years to come," stated Patterson.

"I sat on the beautification committee a few years ago... the number one thing that we decided was to get more murals downtown," explained Ciaburri Brand.

In total, the mural project cost upwards of \$28,000, raised entirely by Leadership Belton from their donors.

"Learning how to fundraise, getting through the red tape, getting approved by city council, you're learning so many things in the leadership program," added Adam Fulton.

Attendees enjoyed hot dogs and refreshments after the remarks. A delegation from Temple College was present with mascot and swag to support program participant Lorenzo Reyes. Inside the library, children sat for a story reading.

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To be considered for inclusion in the Belton Journal, all submissions must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Monday of the week in question.

Opinions expressed (including Letters to the Editor) are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by the Belton Journal's management, staff or advertisers. Letters to the Editor should not exceed more than 350 words. Contact us at (254) 939-5754.

OBITUARIES



Albright

Jonette Albright

July 3, 1952 – May 12, 2026

Jonette was born to John and Edith (Morgan) Philpot on July 3, 1952. Born three months premature and weighing just over one pound, her survival was considered remarkable. From the very beginning, Jonette showed the strength and determination that would define her life.

Jonette spent her early years in Odessa before moving to Hughes Springs, where she graduated from high school. Her children were both born while she earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, completing that degree at Texas Women's University. She devoted more than two decades to caring for others as a nurse before going on to earn her master's degree from Baylor University and spending the next 25 years caring for patients as a Nurse Practitioner.

Faith was at the center of Jonette's life. The Episcopal Church was her spiritual home wherever life took her. Over the years, she was a devoted member of Holy Trinity by the Lake in Heath, Holy Trinity in Garland, and Christ Church in Temple. Through worship, Bible studies, fellowship, and service, she built lifelong friendships and touched countless lives with her kindness and generosity.

Jonette never met a stranger and rarely sat still for long. She treasured her friendships deeply, whether they began through church, her children's high school activities, or community groups. From Taco Tuesdays with the Newcomers' Club to road trips to Broken Bow with lifelong friends, she filled her life with laughter, connection, and love. She was endlessly thoughtful and giving. Even if she didn't know the family, she volunteered for every Meal Train she heard about. She also enjoyed arriving at a gathering carrying homemade cinnamon rolls or a favorite cobbler. Caring for others came naturally to her, and she made people feel seen, welcomed, and loved.

Above all else, Jonette loved her family. She cherished her extended family, adored her nieces and nephews, and found great joy in her brother Paul and "baby sister" Betty. But the deepest joy of her life was found in her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. One of her happiest seasons began when she moved to Central Texas so she could live close to both of her children, Angie and Nyle, and spend precious time surrounded by the family she loved so dearly.

Jonette is survived by her children, Elizabeth (Rob); Angie (Steven); Jill (Greg) and Nyle (Michelle); her grandchildren, Nyle (Samantha), Riley (Lya), Kaylin, Jack (Olivia), Ginger, Emily, Gracie, Will, Andy, and Georgia; her great-grandchildren, Anastasia and Riley Sue; her brother, Paul (Sheryl), and sister, Betty (Darrell); and numerous beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, and dear friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Gene, grandson Trason, and parents, John Philpot and Edith Barnett.

Jonette will be laid to rest at Christ Episcopal Church in Temple, TX. Service details will be forthcoming through her family and Christ Church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Christ Episcopal Church or to Southwest Transplant Alliance.



Higginbotham

Charles Dean Higginbotham

September 7, 1956 – May 15, 2026

Charles Dean Higginbotham, beloved brother, husband, father, grandfather, public servant, and Santa Claus, passed away on May 15, 2026.

Dean was born on September 7, 1956, to Olan and Esta Higginbotham. His upbringing instilled strong Texas values and, most importantly, empathy. He was a graduate of Belton High School and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Dean married the love of his life, Glenda Moore. Together they built a home filled with love and laughter while raising their three children in Georgetown, Texas.

Dean dedicated his life to serving others, making the community a better and safer place for all. Through his work with Williamson County Juvenile Services and the Sheriff's Office, he selflessly helped countless individuals and families until his retirement.

Dean was also known for another important role — Santa Claus. With his warm smile, familiar beard, and joyful spirit, he brought wonder and happiness to children and families over the years. He loved making people smile, feel welcomed, and believe in a little extra kindness.

Dean was preceded in death by his parents, Olan and Esta Higginbotham; his stepfather, William Warren; and his wife, Glenda Higginbotham.

He is survived by his wife, Elin Criswell Higginbotham; his sister, Mary Dunlap; brothers Don Higginbotham and Ronnie Higginbotham.

He also leaves behind his children: son Benjamin Higginbotham, his wife Melissa, and their children Derek and Ava; daughter Megan Higginbotham; and son Jared Higginbotham and his fiancée, Janiece Attal.

Dean is also lovingly remembered by his nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews, cousins, and many lifelong friends whose lives were better for having known him.

His Celebration of Life will be held at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 7th, at The Grove Church, 23911 Ronald Reagan Blvd, Liberty Hill, TX 78642.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Williamson County Brown Santa, 508 S. Rock Street, Georgetown, Texas 78626.

BHS Marching 100 to dedicate Rose Bowl Parade banner

Special to the Journal

The BHS Marching 100 will celebrate a bit of history on Saturday, June 13, at 11 a.m., at the Bell County Museum when they dedicate the banner that was used when the band marched in the 1974 Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California.



Alumni Band with many of those who marched that parade still perform together and will again at the Belton 4th of July Parade this year on the front lawn of the Bell County Courthouse.

For those who are old enough to remember, The Marching 100 under the direction of Richard Crain, numbering more than 200 at the time, loaded up on a half dozen buses and headed west for the parade.

The youngest of those kids are 60-something now.

The Marching 100

The community is invited to come to the Bell County Museum and share.

The banner and other memorabilia will be dedicated that morning.

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Young entrepreneur creates mobile car detailing service in Bell County

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Entrepreneur by age 16, Drew Montano has two and a half years of experience detailing vehicles in Bell County with Drew's Detailing Services. Graduating high school in June, his business model that comes to the client, focusing on building quality relationships with customers.

"I've always had a love for cars and trucks. My dad got me into them when I was a little kid. I already had everything I needed to get started, and I just kind of took it from there," said Montano.

He confidently calls himself a perfectionist, detailing his customers' vehicles as he does his personal vehicle.

"I go the extra mile to make sure everything is as clean and looking as good as it can be," said Montano.

Drew's Detailing Services offers exterior detailed cleaning with additional options like headlight and taillight restoration. For the interior, an additional option is applying leather seat conditioner. The full list of services and pricing is on his Instagram page.

A mobile business, Montano comes to you; the Texas weather sets his work hours. "I like to get everything done in the morning. With it getting hot, it's hard to keep water spots off the vehicles during the afternoon," said Montano, adding that, "we require water and electric."

He tries to keep a balance between work and time with family and friends. His family has been supportive.

Montano said his family has been amazing and they've helped him tremendously.

Homeschooled, Montano started dirt bike riding

at age five and raced between the ages of thirteen and seventeen.

"I raced motocross for five years and got really good at it and I kept getting injured. I figured it was time to find something different," said Montano.

He stopped racing at the beginning of 2026 and is graduating from iUniversity Prep Virtual Academy.

"I get to work with so many cool cars and trucks. I really don't have a favorite. I dare to say my personal favorite is probably washing my own truck, because it has my business all over it," said Montano.

"I've learned that if I can just put my mind to something and stick with it, it usually works out, and that's what I'm choosing to do," said Montano.

For inquiries about Drew's Detailing Services, call 505-796-2278 or visit the Instagram page at dds_mobiledetailing221.

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- ✓ Cold temperatures can harden and/or damage rubber, so it's important to check your belts and hoses for damage.
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Speech language pathologist opens Sunny Speech, LLC in Belton

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Christy Villegas, with a master's in speech pathology and 16 years of working in local ISDs, has opened Sunny Speech, LLC. Beginning her career as a pre-kindergarten and second-grade teacher, changed careers when observing her son Aden, age three, getting help for his speech impairment at Baylor Scott and White.

Villegas said, "I was like, oh my gosh, this girl's playing games and helping him. I want to learn more. I want to be able to do that."

Villegas also works as a supervising SLP for BISD. Prior to opening Sunny Speech, she provided speech assistance for three years at a day care and out of her home.

She said, "There's a great need for speech therapy right now in our community. There are just very long wait lists currently within all the clinics."

Providing hands-on play, Villegas records sessions with the children she shares with the parents. This tool shows a child's progress and ways a parent can mimic the interactions at home.

Villegas said, "I just connect well with the families, because I've been in their shoes, help them, encourage them. It's go-

ing to be okay. You're going to get through this, if you get the right support."

Cupboards filled with toys and bins with sensory activities, Villegas said she creates a weekly theme for her clients. For example, a storybook matched with a physical activity, including sensory items, keeps things interesting. She said if she's not having fun, neither will the children.

Her clients are mainly from Belton, and Temple, but she has clients that drive from Corsicana too.

Sunny Speech is a private paid clinic providing speech therapy for children from birth to age eighteen for \$60 a session. Villegas is applying for credentialing with Blue Cross Blue Shield, TRICARE, and Medicaid.

Building a relationship with the family and the child is a top priority for Villegas. She attends events in the children's lives, like sports or dance. She said this helps build trust, which leads to progress for the child.

Villegas cautions not to compare one child's progress with another, citing that she has had children finish with her services after three weeks and others who she's worked with for three years.

Villegas said, "Depending on how often your child is receiving speech, the amount of time, the frequency, and how



Courtesy Photo

Christy Villegas, speech-language pathologist, amongst some of her toys that help her work with children.

often they're practicing at home will also change how fast their language will acquire."

Villegas said, "Early intervention, if you can get your kid in as soon as possible. Don't do the wait and see method. Try and get them in so then they graduate and be done."

The public is invited to Sunny Speech's

ribbon-cutting opening Friday, July 24, at 4 pm, hosted by the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce. Light refreshments provided.

Contact Villegas by phone at 903-229-3900, by email at sunnyspeechtx@gmail.com, or send a message through Facebook on the Sunny Speech page. Look up Sunny Speech's Facebook page to see Villegas working with her clients.

High5HotDogs will host 5th Annual Hotdog Eating Contest

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

High5HotDogs will be hosting their annual hotdog eating contest on July 4th after the Belton parade, starting at 12 p.m. at Liberty Park. There will be two separate contests with 10 contestants each, one for kids ages ten to fifteen, and one for adults, with the kids competing for free due to a generous donation.

Each contestant will try to down as many hot dogs as possible, bun and all, within the span of three minutes.

Kid prizes this year include a Nintendo Switch Lite and a Spare Time bowling party for six, with more prizes still to be announced. All kid participants will receive some kind of goody. Adult prizes currently

include a weed-eater/leaf-blower combo and a \$200 dollar gift card to a local tattoo shop.

Jennifer Joy Martin, owner of High-5HotDogs, has done this contest four times before, with this year being the fifth. She started her business in 2019 shortly before she joined the chamber. She wondered why there was no hotdog eating contest, when Randy, president of the Belton Chamber, suggested that she was the perfect person to do it, and so she did.

Jennifer said about the hotdog eating contest, "It's popular, it's fun, and

it's affordable." She said, "If they do it in New York, we can do it in Belton, Texas."

The event is not only fun, but also supports the community. There will be an item raffled off that supports the local nonprofit, Priceless Beginnings, which helps victims of domestic violence. It's something that hits close to home for Jennifer, "I've been through it myself." She said, "it's something that means a lot to me."

The deadline to sign up as a contestant is June 29th. Information can be found on the High5HotDogs facebook page, as well as Jennifer's personal facebook page. Those who want to sponsor, sign up themselves, or sign up someone else can contact Jennifer directly or contact the Belton Chamber of Commerce.



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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Crow and Cactus Co. reopens after remodel due to January's freeze



Courtesy Photo

Crow and Cactus Co. reopened Wednesday and will hold a ribbon-cutting grand reopening on June 12.

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Crow and Cactus Co., a luxury home store and interior design studio, opened Wednesday, June 3, after a needed remodel because of January's freeze.

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce is holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its grand reopening on June

12 at 3 p.m. The public is welcome to attend.

Moving from Pearl Street to Penelope Street provided the space to showcase furniture built by a company in Mexico that uses repurposed wood, discovered by Amy Morter, Crow and Cactus Co. owner.

"We've been closed since January, which has been very stressful, but it's

going to give us the opportunity to pivot and start thinking about how we're going to move forward," said Morter.

She describes her store on Penelope Street, which carries a selection of teas, leather goods, apothecary, olive oils, gourmet cooking items, copper, and olive wood pieces.

Morter said, "We are not just a gift store. We are a furniture store and an interior design studio. We do both residential and commercial."

Morter cares about where her products are made and carries artists such as Dolan Gieman in Colorado.

"I want them to be high quality when it's a product that has some sort of cultural significance. I like to find other artisans, local businesses."

Morter, also a board member of Grace Art Gallery, was hired to design the interiors of Highland's Lounge, Hell-yeah!, and an executive lounge in Waco.

She is looking forward to the next commercial project opportunity. In homes, she works with a wide range of interior design styles.

"People started asking me if I could help them with their homes, and so eventually I just started moving myself into that interior design area," said Morter.

In the coming months, Crow and Cactus Co. will begin designing its own

furniture from reclaimed wood.

"It'll be a Crow and Cactus line of reclaimed wood custom furniture as well, a really incredible line. Some of the wood is 200 years old. We will design pieces specifically for our clients and our customers," said Morter.

Morter first opened Crow and Cactus Co. after a successful booth experience.

"We had our very first booth at Christmas on the Chisholm Trail in 2022. That was my test bed to see if I was offering something that this market would enjoy. It went really well," said Morter.

Moving 32 times between her father's military service and her husband's exposed her to the beauty of other countries. She also learned how to design her own living spaces, large, small, or in between.

"If you're looking for a unique special gift for anniversaries, weddings, or house closings, we've got what you're looking for," said Morter.

Crow and Cactus Co. is open Monday and Tuesday by appointment only. Wednesday through Saturday it is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and closed Sunday. The phone number is (254) 561-8344. The website, www.crowandcactus.com, is where customers register for their interior design process.

Belton resident graduates from CTC's Vocational Nursing Program

Special to the Journal

Central Texas College celebrated a milestone moment as 15 Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) students crossed the threshold into professional practice during CTC's Spring 2026 Vocational Nursing Pinning Ceremony.

Representing Belton, Vanessa Harrison marked a significant achievement in earning her Certificate of Completion in the Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) Program and receiving her nursing pin.

The ceremony followed a time-honored sequence that reflected both tradition and preparation. Each graduate was

individually pinned by instructors, followed by candle lighting and a ceremony with the recitation of the Nightingale Pledge, and the formal presentation of graduates.

LVN Program Coordinator and Professor Bonnie Pagan said the program's intensity prepares students for real-world expectations.

"It is a very vigorous program because it is only nine months," she said, citing extensive academic work, clinical hours and simulations. "The expectation, once they graduate, is to go out and serve our community and provide adequate, safe patient care."

Harrison's journey reflects months of dedication, resilience and teamwork,

preparing her to meet critical workforce needs and deliver safe, patient-centered care, said Dr. Tamara Clunis, Vice Chancellor of Instruction and Workforce Education.

"As healthcare continues to evolve, so does the need for dedicated, well-trained professionals," Clunis said. "At CTC, we are proud to be part of that pipeline, supporting career changers, lifelong learners and first-generation students as they step into meaningful, in-demand roles."

CTC is adding respiratory care as a new course in its healthcare curriculum. The college is currently enrolling students for its fall semester that begins Aug. 17. Learn more at www.ctcd.edu.

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Courtesy Photo

Vanessa Harrison of Belton poses with her son at CTC's nurse pinning ceremony where she recently earned her LVN certification.

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The Miracle We Call Danny



John C. Perry

I recently attended the high school graduation of my youngest grandchild, Danny. He is the last of our nine grandkids to earn his diploma. On the surface, it might look like an ordinary family milestone. But for Danny, and for all of us who love him, this moment was nothing short of

a miracle. Back in 2019, we saw Danny one afternoon and he seemed perfectly fine. Just twentyfour hours later, he was in the ICU at McLane Children's Hospital fighting for his life. My daughter Mandy had found him unconscious on the floor, in the middle of a seizure. Paramedics rushed him to the hospital, where a CT scan revealed a dangerous buildup of fluid causing severe pressure on his brain. The surgical team worked through the night, drilling a hole in his head, and inserting a stint to relieve the pressure. Those hours were filled with fear, tears, and nonstop

prayer. Danny wasn't just a grandson to us, he was a bright, gentle, compassionate kid, full of life and kindness. From the time he was very little, I always felt God had made someone uniquely special in him. Our prayers were answered when he pulled through. But the question remained: Why had this happened? An MRI revealed the cause, a rare brain tumor called a craniopharyngioma, blocking the flow of spinal fluid. More questions followed. Was it malignant? Could it be removed? The answers came slowly. No, it wasn't malignant, praise God! But because

of its location, it could not be removed. It would be something Danny would live with for the rest of his life. During those days, prayers poured in from everywhere. We started "Team Danny," and his story spread even farther when he told an ICU nurse that all he wanted was ChickfilA. The local restaurant responded by sending their mascot and food (which he wasn't allowed to eat yet). A video of Danny in his ICU bed, smiling through tubes and monitors, made its way across the country. Friends of mine in Georgia even saw it on their local news. Radiation treatments

followed, and slowly, strength returned. Little Danny became big Danny, now taller than me, working fulltime his senior year, and preparing to study business marketing in college. He has faced more in his young life than many adults ever will, yet he carries himself with humility, gratitude, and a heart that seems to grow larger every year. Just last week, while handing us graduation tickets outside HEB in Belton, he noticed a plant had fallen far down the sidewalk. Without a word, he walked over to set it upright. That's Danny, instinctively kind, always helping and noticing the small things

that matter. As I watched him cross that stage, I couldn't help but think back to those terrifying nights in the ICU, when we didn't know if he would survive. And now here he is strong, hopeful, planning for the future God has given him. God blessed us with Danny Ray. And seven years ago, God answered thousands and thousands of prayers. God is good, all the time!

John C. Perry is the Immediate Past Lay Leader with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) in the Salado Middle School at 1169 Williams Rd.

Dinosaur George Traveling Museum to stop in Belton

Special to the Journal

Step back in time without leaving town when the Belton Public Library hosts the Dinosaur George Traveling Museum from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday, June 8 at the Harris Community Center in Belton.

This come-and-go natural history experience will transform the Harris Center into a full-scale prehistoric exhibit for community members of all ages – with no road trip required. Based in San Antonio, the Dinosaur George exhibit features real fossils, life-size replicas, dinosaur skulls and bones, interactive exhibits, and a pop-up gift shop.

The Dinosaur George Company is most renowned for its captivating Traveling Museum. They bring the thrilling world of natural history di-

rectly to schools, PreK through High School, across Texas and the continental United States.

The traveling museum showcases a diverse range of prehistoric creatures, with a primary focus on dinosaurs.

From massive dinosaur skulls to intricate fossil replicas, they present exhibit pieces from around the world, and every time period, that captivate young minds and spark their interest in paleontology and natural sciences.

In addition to dinosaurs, they feature other fascinating prehistoric animals such as fish and mammals, providing a comprehensive view of Earth's history.

The free event is sponsored by H-E-B through the Summer at the Library Grant Program. No registration is required.



Courtesy Photo

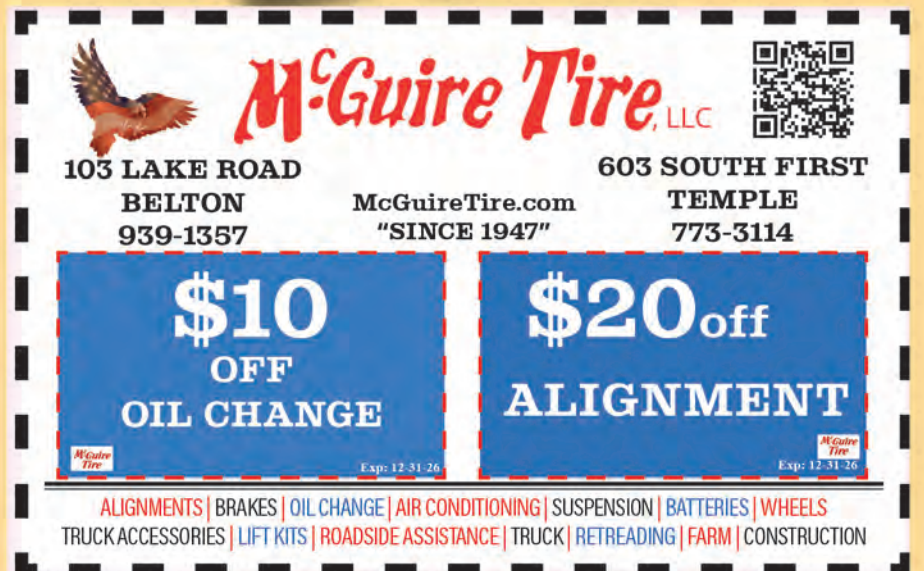
Real fossils, life-size replicas, dinosaur skulls and bones, interactive exhibits, and a pop-up gift shop will transform the Harris Community Center on Monday into the Dinosaur George Traveling Museum.

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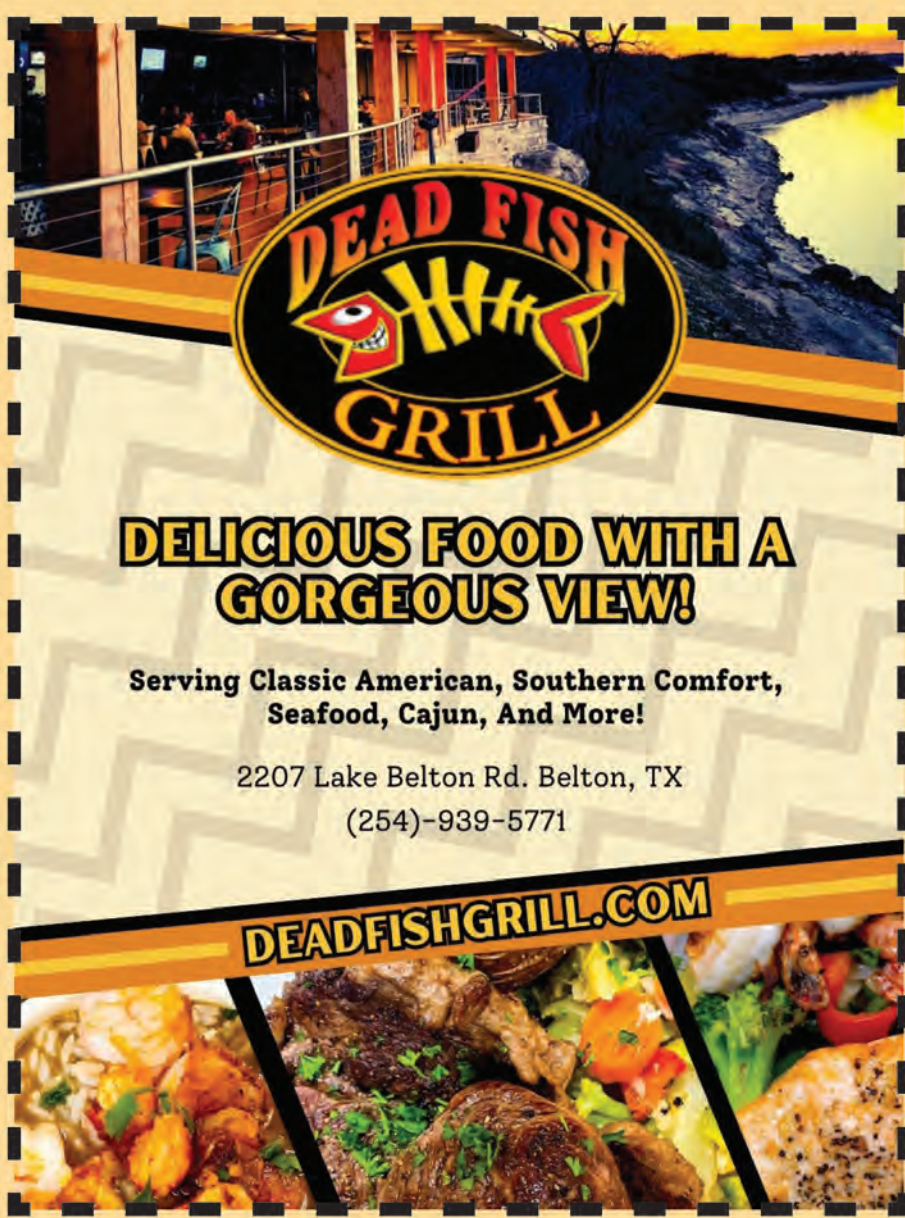
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Belton ISD athletes cap off careers at Victory Bowl

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Last weekend, multiple Belton ISD athletes were afforded one final opportunity to represent their schools.

After spending years dedicating themselves to a sport and, equally important, a team, the time to move on arrived for a number of local standouts, who recently graduated.

Before beginning the next chapter of their lives, however, a final game remained.

Since 2009, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes has conducted its annual Victory Bowl all-star weekend, bringing together dozens of athletes from every University Interscholastic League classification for one last competition and much more.

After being nominated by their coaches, the group selected from across a dozen counties descends on the Waco area for a series of games.

The contests started with consecutive basketball games at Fairfield, where former Tigers guard Noah Childers helped the Red team earn a 97-86 victory.

He now turns his attention to playing for Spurgeon College after amassing 1,000 career points at Belton.

While he was Belton ISD's lone representative in ei-



ther game, that changed the following evening.

At Temple Junior College, separate baseball and softball games were conducted simultaneously, and after competing for the District 16-5A championship just weeks ago, several former Lady Tigers and Lady Broncos united.

On the diamond, Lake Belton's Natalie Hosch and Addison Sims, who helped the Lady Broncos claim the league title with an unblemished 10-0 record, joined with the Belton duo of Iris Molina and Presli Thompson.

Hosch was named the all-district co-pitcher of the year and Sims was a first-team infielder, while Molina and Thompson landed on the first and second team, respectively, before both Belton and Lake Belton advanced to the third round of the playoffs.

As members of the Red roster, there was no final celebration, though, after the game ended in a scoreless tie.

On the football field at Waco ISD Stadium, Broncos teammates Caleb Chandler, Hunter Loraus, Gavin Stewart and Gavin Owens shared the sideline one last time while helping the Red team produce a 28-21 win.

The quartet were part of a 5-6 campaign for Lake Belton last season.

Madison Bingham earned a prestigious honor in her departure by claiming the title of most valuable player for the volleyball match. She spearheaded a 3-1 victory for her Red team.

Bingham was the all-district setter of the year, surpassing 2,500 assists and 1,000 digs for her career.

Prior to the contests, participants spend the week taking part in devotionals, community service projects, practices, skills clinics and fun activities while staying with host families.

Former Belton head coach, Fossett, takes over at Lake

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Jason Fossett is back where it all began.

After establishing himself as one of the area's best head "basketball" coaches, winning district championships at Killeen, Belton and Harker Heights, the veteran is adding one more team to his resume — Lake Belton.

Fossett was recently named the Broncos' new head coach after spending the last two years guiding the Knights to consecutive league titles, but it was simply a chance he could not resist.

"It was an opportunity to come back to Belton," Fossett said. "I helped build Belton High into a winning program, and the challenge of doing something like that at Lake Belton interested me. I'm getting toward the end of my career, and it might be one last challenge.

"Let's see if I can come back and get something going over there."

Along with spending six seasons elevating the Tigers state prominence, Fossett's ties to the town date far further. In 1996, he did his student teaching at Belton, but his legacy at the school came more than 25 years later.

Suffering through a playoff drought with just one berth since 2004, Fossett propelled the Tigers to a school record 30 wins and into the third round of their fourth consecutive postseason appearance in 2024 before departing for Harker Heights.

Adding to his credentials, Fossett was responsible for overseeing the Kangaroos to six consecutive district championships beginning in 2005.

Now, the goal is to find similar success with the Broncos, who have yet to produce a standout season.

Under former head coach Zane

Johnston, who constructed the program from scratch when the school opened, Lake Belton has struggled in district competition since reaching the playoffs in 2022. In the four seasons since, the Broncos are a combined 8-40, coming off back-to-back 1-9 showings.

"It is definitely an intriguing situation," Fossett said. "Zane did a great job, because it is hard to open up a school, but he laid a good foundation. On top of that, I didn't have to move or anything like that, and I already know most of the administration.

"I know everybody wants Lake Belton to be successful, so it all just came together perfectly."

First, however, Fossett must get to know his team, which has been a difficult task.

While Belton ISD has been out of school for some time now, Killeen ISD only recently released, preventing Fos-

sett's ability to interact with players.

His first real opportunity will come June 26, when the Broncos take part in the three-day Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Boys Showcase in Duncanville and Mansfield. The event allows teams to be coached by their head coach.

Although there has not been many meetings between Fossett and his roster yet, he knows what to expect.

Mikey Lockett, a guard, was placed on the 16-5A All-District First Team as a junior last season, while guard Allen Muchunu and center Jackson Striegler, who are both set to be seniors, were honorable mentions.

"I'm excited about this group," Fossett said. "I know they have some really good kids coming up with the incoming freshman and sophomores. It is going to be fun to grow and build with the program as we go."

Belton Tiger baseball looks for new hopefuls in summer camp

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Belton High School baseball program is bringing a new crop of young athletes to the diamond this week as the Tigers Baseball Camp runs June 1 through June 3, giving incoming fourth through ninth graders three mornings of instruction,

competition, and development under the direction of the Belton coaching staff.

Each day features a single session running from 8 to 10:30 a.m., giving campers a focused and high energy block of work that covers the full scope of the game. At \$60 per camper, the Tigers program is offering families in the Belton area an affordable opportunity to get their young players on the field this summer in an environment built around real baseball instruction from a coaching staff that knows what it takes to compete at the high school level.

The camp is structured to serve a broad range of ages and experience levels, from incoming fourth graders just beginning to find their footing in the sport to incoming ninth graders who are on the door-

step of varsity competition. That range is intentional. The Belton coaching staff is approaching the week with the understanding that development looks different at every stage, and the instruction is tailored to meet each camper where they are rather than pushing a one-size-fits-all approach.

On the field, campers are working through the core fundamentals at every level hitting mechanics, fielding, throwing, base running, and situational baseball. The condensed morning format keeps the pace moving and the energy high, giving players the kind of reps and attention that make a real difference when the season rolls around.

For the Tigers program, camps like this one carry significance beyond the summer calendar. They represent a connection point between the Belton baseball identity and the young athletes who could one day carry it forward. Getting a fourth or fifth grader excited about playing for the Tigers is an investment that pays dividends long before they ever put on a varsity uniform.

More information about the Belton's summer athletic programs is available at beltontigers.com.



Lake Belton girl's basketball camp looking to develop young athletes

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton High School girls basketball program is bringing young athletes to the hardwood this week for three days of skill development, coaching, and competition as the Lady Broncos Basketball Camp runs June 1 through June 3.

Designed to serve a wide range of age groups, the camp is split into two sessions to give every participant the most focused and age appropriate experience possible. Incoming first through fifth graders are taking the floor from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., while incoming sixth through ninth graders are getting their reps in during the afternoon session from 2 to 4:30 p.m. The split format ensures that younger campers are developing in an environment built around their skill level while older players are being pushed toward the kind of competition and instruction that mirrors what they will face at the middle and high school level.

At \$60 per camper, the Lady Broncos program is offering families in the Temple and Belton area a valuable and affordable way to keep their young athletes active and improving this summer. Whether a camper is picking up a basketball for the first time or looking to sharpen skills already in de-

velopment, the Lake Belton coaching staff is providing the kind of instruction and attention that makes the experience worthwhile regardless of experience level.

Beyond the basketball fundamentals, ball handling, shooting mechanics, defensive footwork, and team concepts the camp is also giving participants something that does not always show up on a stat sheet. The opportunity


to make new friends, build confidence, and connect with the Lake Belton program at a young age is as much a part of the week as any drill or scrimmage. For many of the younger campers, this week may represent their first real introduction to organized basketball instruction, and the Lady Broncos staff is making sure that introduction leaves a lasting impression.

For a program that has built its identity around developing players from the ground up, camps like this one are about more than just summer basketball. They are about building a pipeline, fostering a love for the game, and giving the next generation of Lady Broncos a reason to dream about playing under the lights at LBHS.

More information about Lake Belton's upcoming camps is available at lakebeltonathletics.com.



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Broncos incoming freshman golfer Hayes Pethtel delivered a first-place showing at the recent 2026 Fore! Challenge. Hosted by Burnet's Delaware Springs Golf Course, the STPGA Prestige Tour event condensed its 36 holes into a single day due to inclement weather, and Pethtel capitalized. He finished with a 141, following an opening-round 71

Belton Lake: Stillhouse

FAIR. Water normal stain; 60 degrees; 0.87 feet below pool. It is a "tale of two fisheries" right now for Lake Belton white bass. There are fish steadily making their way up the Leon River to spawn, and there are fish still residing in the main lake. Both have their pros and cons. The river fishery is best on the weekdays and during poor weather when fishing pressure is minimized, otherwise, expect plenty of company. Trolling crankbaits which imitate medium-sized threadfin shad, like the Bomber 5A, or the Storm Smash Shad will put fish in the boat slowly but steadily. If you closely watch side-imaging, you will likely spot migrating schools which can be cast to to put bonus fish in the boat. Horsehead-style jigs with an under-spin in white and chartreuse less than 2 inches long do well. Back on the main lake the deep, lethargic fish which have been present but difficult to goad into biting are now much more aggressive. Look in 35 feet or less along the old Leon River channel or Cowhouse Creek channel during bright conditions, and as shallow as 12-14 feet at first light, last light, and under cloud cover. The Mini White Bass Alabama rig with white paddle tails less than 3 inches long or MAL Originals get the job done when retrieved with a sawtooth retrieve. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are excellent in 10-25 feet of water. Slow drifting with suspended baits around points and river channels has worked best for blue catfish. Flathead catfish are slow, but have been caught near structure and rock piles with live perch and shad. Channel catfish are fair and have been caught in shallow water around timber using punch bait. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

FAIR. Water stained; 60 degrees; 1.90 feet below pool. It is a "tale of two fisheries" right now for Stillhouse white bass. There are fish steadily making their way up the Lampasas River to spawn, and there are fish still residing in the main lake. Both have their pros and cons. The river fishery is best on the weekdays and during poor weather when fishing pressure is minimized, otherwise, expect plenty of company in tight quarters. Trolling crankbaits which imitate medium-sized threadfin shad, like the Bomber 5A, or the Storm Smash Shad will put fish in the boat slowly but steadily. If you closely watch side-imaging, you will likely spot migrating schools which can be cast to to put bonus fish in the boat. Horsehead-style jigs with an underpin in white and chartreuse less than 2 inch long do well. Back on the main lake the deep, lethargic fish which have been present but difficult to goad into biting are now much more aggressive. Look in 35 feet or less along the old Lampasas River channel during bright conditions, and as shallow as 12-14 feet at first light, last light, and under cloud cover. The mini white bass Alabama rig with white paddle tails less than 3 inches long or MAL Originals get the job done when retrieved with a sawtooth retrieve. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.



with a 70 and shooting 11 birdies along the way with one measuring 100 feet.

Pethtel will be joining a Broncos roster that won the District 16-5A championship last season. Lake Belton, however, will be elevated to Class 6A beginning this school year.

WRESTLING

Lake Belton will hold summer skills sessions beginning next week.

The sessions will be held each Monday and Wednesday from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

BASKETBALL

The Lady Tigers recently announced their schedule for the upcoming Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Girls Showcase.

The prestigious annual event will take place at Bryan, beginning June 18.

Belton opens June 19 against Spring at 5:40 p.m. The contest will be held at Rudder High School.

The Lady Tigers close with games against Jersey Village (10:05 a.m., Sadberry Intermediate School) and Hutto (4:35 p.m., Legends Event Center) the following day.

Lake Belton will also be in attendance.

The three-day Boys Showcase will be held at Duncanville and Mansfield beginning June 26, and both the Tigers and Broncos will be competing.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

Belton's summer strength and conditioning program is underway and is open to all middle school and high school athletes.

On the available dates throughout June and July, high

school boys will begin two-hour sessions at 8 a.m., while middle school boys start at 7 a.m.

Regardless of school, all girls will begin each day at 9 a.m. For more information, visit BeltonTigers.com.

SUMMER CAMPS

Belton and Lake Belton are now offering summer sports camps to area youth.

The camps will be available to boys and girls of all skill levels that are preparing to enter kindergarten through 12th grade, and they will be conducted at the respective campuses.

Led by team coaches, volleyball, basketball, softball, baseball, soccer and tennis camps will be available.

Dates and times will vary by sport.

Registration is open at events.hometownticketing.com/beltonisd.

For more information, BeltonTigers.com or LakeBelton-Athletics.com.

RUNNING

Registration for the Lions on the Leon Captain "D" Dash for Sight is open until race day Oct. 3.

Hosted by the Belton Lions Club, the five-kilometer race will be held at Heritage Park beginning at 8:30 a.m. An opening ceremony will start at 8:15 a.m.

The event will begin and end at the Lions Pavilion.

Awards will be given to the top three finishers in each age group, and an award will be given to the best pirate costume.

The race proceeds help provide eye exams and glasses for those in need, and donations of used glasses will be accepted for recycling.

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Granny's Shaved Ice celebrates move to new location

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

Granny's Shaved Ice just moved to 619 N Main Street, and had their grand opening Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They are now officially open six days a week, from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, and 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday. They sell gourmet snow cones, acai bowls, smoothies, and dirty sodas.

For their grand opening, they had bouquets set up, as well as a custom cake. Hunny Belle Boutique, located inside Granny's, also had their grand opening.

Skylar Stewart, owner of Granny's, talked about the evolution of her business, starting in 2017, up until the recent move. "We started in a small food truck, and we were in that food truck for a little bit, and then we got into a bigger one, and then we got into a *bigger* one, and then we went to our first permanent location over on Northeast Street, and then we recently moved here."

She said, "I love the location of

this. I love being on Main Street, being close to UMHB. We have a lot of UMHB kids. There was an opportunity to be here, and I felt like it was a good one."

Skylar appreciates the Belton community and its impact on her business. "I just like to have a place in Belton that everyone can come. Everyone's welcome. I also think the Belton community is really supportive. They really help small businesses grow here."

Skylar also likes having the opportunity to support local vendors. "I always do a lot of events with vendors, because I like to involve the community. If people don't have a brick and mortar spot, they can always come here and set up on the porch or in the backyard, and they have a place to be."

She loves to see the kids come in and have a good time, "I just want everyone to feel very safe and welcomed and loved here, and I love when I get to be able to see kids in here smiling and being happy, and then even adults that come in here and they look relaxed."



Courtesy Photo

Skylar Stewart, owner of Granny's Shaved Ice, just opened a new location on Main St in Belton.

She said, "It's just sweet knowing that memories, and a lot of kids will come here, and it's kind of their happy place."

DPS announces driver license card updates

Special to the Journal

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), in partnership with the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities (GCPD), recently announced changes to Texas-issued driver license and identification cards under the Texas Driving with Disability Program.

The intent is to improve communication between law enforcement and Texans with certain disabilities and health conditions.

Now, those who voluntarily participate in the Texas Driving with Disability Program will have the "Communication Impediment" or the new "Deaf/Hard of Hearing" option prominently placed on the front of the on their Texas DL or ID card.

Previously, only the "Communication Impediment" option was available.

Those who qualify can indicate on their license or ID card that they have a disability or health condition that may impede their ability to communicate with a law enforcement officer.

The list of qualifying disabilities or health conditions under this program include autism, brain injury, cerebral palsy, down syndrome, mild intellectual disability, Parkinson's Disease, posttraumatic stress disorder, as well as speech and language disorders including mutism, stuttering, speech delay aphasia, and spasmodic dysphonia, as well as deaf or hard of hearing.

To participate, customers must bring Physician/Psychiatrist's Statement Form DL-101, signed by their healthcare provider, along with the other standard documentation the department requires for license or ID card transactions, to an in-person appointment at a DPS office.

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LEGALS

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – CIVIL CAUSE NO. 26DCV359702

To THE UNKOWN HEIRS OF ABDUL SHAHEED

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the original petition for foreclosure at or before 10 o'clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o'clock AM, before the Honorable 169th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said original petition for foreclosure was filed in said court on February 19, 2026.

The file number of said suit being No. 26DCV359702. The names of the parties in said suit are:

BANK OF AMERICA, N.A. VS. SHIRLEY ANN GUNTHER, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE UNKOWN HEIRS OF ABDUL SHAHEED

The nature of said suit being substantially as follows, to wit: Bank of America, N.A. ("Plaintiff"), its successors in interest or assigns, by and through its attorney of record, Bradley Conway of Marinosci Law Group, P.C., 16415 Addison Road, Suite 725, Addison, TX 75001, (972) 331-2300, brought suit against Shirley Ann Gunther, The unknown heirs at law of Abdul Shaheed, deceased, the United States of America on Behalf of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development ("Defendants"), to enforce the Note on the property located at 1202 North 4th Street Killeen, TX 76543 ("Property"), and legally described as SEE EXHIBIT A

This was issued at the request of attorney: BRADLEY CONWAY MARINOSCI LAW GROUP PC 16415 ADDISON ROAD SUITE 725 ADDISON TX 75001.

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 AM on Monday next following the expiration of forty- two days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on May 06, 2026. Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909 Belton, Texas 76513

EXHIBIT "A", LEGAL DESCRIPTION for a tract of land in Bell County, Texas, part of the J.

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LEGALS

R. Smith Survey, Abstract No. 797 and being the same tract described as 0.145 acre in a deed to Centex Properties recorded in Volume 4614, Page 759 official Public records of Real Property of Bell County, Texas, and known as part of Lot 3, block 8, Scharbauer Addition recorded in Volume 86, Page 326, Deed records of Bell County, Texas. The Bearings and Distances shown herein are Existing Calls and Record Calls.

BEGINNING at a ½" iron rod found at the intersection of the north right of way line of Garrison Avenue and the east right of way line of North 4th Street being the southwest corner of Lot 3 and the southwest corner of the 0.145 acre tract for the southwest corner of this THENCE, 17 deg. 04' 56" E, 69.92 feet with the east right of way line of North 4th Street to a ½" iron rod found in concrete being the southwest corner of the Howard G. Fisher tract recorded in Volume 1148, page 237 and the northwest corner of the 0.145 acre tract, for the northwest corner of this.

THENCE S.71 deg. 16' 22" E, 89.82 feet to a ½" iron rod found in the west line of the Jimmy & Janice Woodwall tract recorded in Volume 3442, Page 50 being the southwest corner of the Fisher tract and the northeast corner of the 0.145 acre tract for the northeast corner of this. THENCE S. 16 deg. 56' 25" W, 70.35 feet to a ½" iron rod found in the north right of way line of Garrison Avenue being the southwest corner of the Woodwall tract and the southeast corner of the 0.145 care tract for the southeast corner of this. THENCE N. 71 deg. 00' 00" W, 90.01 feet base bearing with north right of way line of Garrison Avenue to the place of beginning containing 0.145 acre of land according to my survey and my calculations.

The bearings of this Legal Description are based on the south line of the tract described as 0.145 acre in a Deed to Centex Properties recorded in Volume 4614, Page 759, Official Public Records of Real Property of Bell County, Texas.

By: M Cortez Deputy Clerk
05.14,21,28,06.04

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – CIVIL CAUSE NO. 26DCV361378

To UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF WILLIAM THOMAS CRUMLEY SR., DECEASED UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ALICE CRUMLEY, DECEASED

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the ORIGINAL PETITION at or before 10 o'clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o'clock AM, before the Honorable 169th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said ORIGINAL PETITION was filed in said court on April 29, 2026.

The file number of said suit being No. 26DCV361378. The names of the parties in said suit are:

FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION VS. SHIANCA LATOSHA TAYLOR, BONNIE TAYLOR, JR, DIANA TURNER-ROBERT, UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ALICE CRUMLEY, DECEASED, UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF WILLIAM THOMAS CRUMLEY SR., DECEASED

The nature of said suit being substantially as follows, to wit:

THIS PROCEEDING CONCERNS THE FORECLOSURE OF A LIEN ON THE FOLLOWING REAL PROPERTY AND IMPROVEMENTS COMMONLY KNOWN AS 2402 LAKE RD., KILLEEN, TX 76543, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS LOT 10, BLOCK 9, KIRBY CREEK VILLAGE, SECTION IV, AN ADDITION TO THE CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE, DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN VOLUME 97120, PAGE 256, MAP RECORDS OF DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS.

This was issued at the request of attorney: TENIA OUELLETTE TROMBERG MILLER MORRIS & PARTNERS 6080 TENNYSON PKWY STE 100 PLANO TX 75024.

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 AM on Monday next following the expiration of forty two days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more

LEGALS

at TexasLawHelp.org.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on May 13, 2026. Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909 Belton, Texas 76513

By: M Cortez , Deputy Clerk
05.21, 05.28, 06.04, 06.11

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

for a Wine and Malt Beverage Retailer's On Premise Permit by HEB Beverage Company, LLC dba HEB Food Store #039, 2509 N Main St, Belton, Bell County, Texas. HEB Retailers, LLC, Managing Member; Howard E. Butt, President; Lynette Padalecki, Chief Financial Officer; Yun C. Au, Secretary; Joseph F. Fielder, Assistant Secretary; Jennifer M. Heath, Vice President.
05.28, 06.04 PD

PUBLISHED NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that letters of guardianship for the Estate of Judy Elaine Dobbins, an incapacitated person, were issued on May 14, 2026, in Docket No. 26CPB00152, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to David Andrew Dobbins, Guardian, as guardian of the Estate of Judy Elaine Dobbins. David Andrew Dobbins elects that claims may be presented against the Estate of Judy Elaine Dobbins to him c/o his attorney, Benjamin D. Burnett, 15 North Main Street, Temple, Texas 76501.

All persons having claims against this estate are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
SIGNED on May 29, 2026.

/s/ Benjamin D. Burnett, Benjamin D. Burnett Attorney for Guardian, State Bar No.: 24072012, benjaminburnett@bcswlaw.com, 15 North Main Street, Tel: (254) 743-7324
06.04

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION NUMBER 26CPB00338

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS

JULIE MERIDA, Applicant, on May 28, 2026, filed an application to determine heirship and for letters

of independent administration in a proceeding styled: JOE SALVADOR MERIDA GONZALEZ, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00338 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be June 04, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.

All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: STEVE BLYTHE, 319 N THIRD ST, PO BOX 2088, TEMPLE TX 76503

The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on May 29, 2026.

Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By: Andrea Marks Deputy
06.04

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

for a Wine & Malt Beverage Retailer's Off-Premise Permit (BQ) by D&S Brothers 2019 LLC d/b/a Peace Food Mart, to be located at 1000 Squire Drive Suite A, Belton, Bell County, Texas 76513. Members of said LLC are Deepesh Chaturvedi and Sunil Adhikari.
05.28, 06.04 PD

LEGALS**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MELBA RUTH IMPSON, Deceased, were issued on May 27, 2026, in Cause No. 24CPB00791, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1, Bell County, Texas, to: LYNDA GRUBBS fka LYNDA FENN.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: ASHLEY CLAPPER Attorney at Law, 603 North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541 DATED the 29TH day of May, 2026.

CORBIN & CLAPPER, PC 603, North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541, Tel: (254) 526-4523 ,Fax: (254) 526-6711

By: ASHLEY CLAPPER, DANIEL A. CORBIN, State Bar No. 04814300, ASHLEY CLAPPER, State Bar No. 24076317, Legal@CorbinLegalTeam.com Attorney for LYNDA GRUBBS fka LYNDA FENN
06.04

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of VIRGINIA ELIZABETH COMBS, Deceased, were issued on May 27, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00629, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: TRAVIS COMBS.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF VIRGINIA ELIZABETH COMBS, c/o: TRAVIS COMBS, 710 E 17th St., Cameron, TX 76520

DATED the 19 day of May, 2026.

J. ERIC STOEBNER, State Bar No.: 24049619, 2106 Bird Creek Drive, Temple, TX 76502 ,Telephone: (254) 771-1855 ,Facsimile: (254) 771-2082 ,E-mail: eric@templelawoffice.com
06.04

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of BARBARA ANN SCHILLER, Deceased, were issued on May 28, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00171, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: ROBERT THOMAS.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF BARBARA ANN SCHILLER, c/o: ROBERT THOMAS, 7 Driftwood, Belton, TX 76513

DATED May 28, 2026.

KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: karen@templelawoffice.com
06.04

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of SHIRLEY ANN KETCHAM, Deceased, were issued on May 27, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00104, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: TERRI LEE KETCHAMTUBBS.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: Jeffrey Thigpen Attorney at Law, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503

SIGNED on May 28, 2026.

Jeffrey Thigpen Attorney for TERRI LEEKETCHAM-TUBBS, State Bar No.: 24099990, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503, Telephone: (254) 773-1663, Facsimile: (254) 773-257,4 Email: jeff@linzythigpen.com
06.04

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 26CPB00336**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM MANSOUR, Applicant, on May 27, 2026, filed an application for independent administration, for letters of administration and for application to determine heirship in a proceeding styled: DONNA MARY MANSOUR, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00336 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be June 04, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.

All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or

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answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JEFFREY THIGPEN, PO BOX 428 ,TEMPLE TX 76503

The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on May 28, 2026.

Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By: Andrea Marks Deputy
06.04

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION – PARENT
AND CHILD
CAUSE NO. 291295**

TO: RENAULT BOSTON

Greetings

You are hereby commanded to appear before the 264th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas, to be held at the courthouse of said County in the City of Belton, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock AM of the Monday next after the expiration of 20 days after the date of service of which this citation, then and there to answer the PETITION INTERVENTION IN SUIT TO MODIFY PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP of IN RE: JANA E MACKENZIE BOSTON filed in said Court on March 13, 2026, against RENAULT BOSTON , respondent, and said suit being number 291295, on the docket of said Court, and entitled In the Interest of Children JANA E MACKENZIE BOSTON, D.O.B. 02/29/2012 The nature of which suit is a request to Parent/Child Relationship.

The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgement or decree in the child's/children's interest which will be binding upon you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child's/children's adoption.

The officer executing this writ shall promptly serve the same according to requirements of law, and the mandates hereof, and make due return as the law directs.

This was issued at the request of attorney: ASHLEY CLAPPER- CORBIN & CLAPPER, 603 NORTH 8TH STREET, KILLEEN, TX 76541

NOTICE TO Defendant: You have been sued.

You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 AM on Monday next following the expiration of twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.

Witness, Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas.

Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on May 28, 2026.

Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513

By: M Cortez , Deputy Clerk
06.04

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 26CPB00335**

To: Other Living Relatives

No Known Address

BRANDI L. KNOX, Applicant, on May 27, 2026, filed an Application for Appointment of Guardian of the Person with Full Authority in a proceeding styled: Aaliyah D. Acosta, an Incapacitated Person, and bearing the number 26CPB00335 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be June 04, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.

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All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Mary Wiley; 100 W. Central Texas Expwy, Ste 306, Harker Heights, TX 76548

The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on May 27, 2026.

Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480 ,1201 Huey Road Belton, TX 76513

By: Angela Busby Deputy
06.04

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MARLENE J. HOLDEN, Deceased, were issued on May 11, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00217, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: CINDY L. JOHNSON.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: Jeffrey Thigpen Attorney at Law, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503

SIGNED on May 14, 2026.

Jeffrey Thigpen Attorney for CINDY L. JOHNSON, State Bar No.: 24099990, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503, Telephone: (254) 773-1663, Facsimile: (254) 773-2574, Email: jeff@linzythigpen.com
06.04

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 26CPB00333**

TO: UNKNOWN HEIRS

CHERI FOSTER-PENROD, Applicant, on May 26, 2026, filed an application to determine heirship and for letters of dependent administration in a proceeding styled: RUSSELL LEE SCOTT, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00333 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be June 04, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.

All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: STEPHEN E. BLYTHE, PO BOX 2088 , 319 N THIRD ST., TEMPLE, TX 76503

The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on May 26, 2026.

Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By: Erika DeCasas Deputy
06.04

**APPLICATION HAS BEEN FILED WITH
THE
TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE
COMMISSION**

For Caseys Marketing Company for a Wine Only Package Store d/b/a Casey's #4742 located at 500

E FM 2410 Rd., Harker Heights, Bell County, TX 76548. Officers: Samuel James – President, Brian Johnson – VP, Douglas Beech – Asst. Sec., Scott Faber – Secretary, Eric Larsen – Treasurer
06.04, 06.11 pd

EDITORIAL

Work smarter, not harder

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

We often hear, “Work smarter, not harder.” So, what does that mean, exactly?

People proclaim that they work very hard, but is it just busy-work, or are they productive? What do they have to show for their work?

Anyone can say they’ve worked hard for 8-10 hours a day, but are they merely “riding the clock” and appearing busy?

Or, are they working using old methods when there is something newer and faster available?

To me, work is rewarding when you have something to show for it. You’ve created a product, provided a service, fixed a problem, built something new –fill in the blank. And, in the best of worlds, you get paid a fair wage for what you’ve done.

However, there are few things more frustrating than exercises in futility, the feeling that no matter what you do, you’ll have nothing to show for it.

Working smarter not harder, is one of my regular slogans. We’re always looking for ways to do the same thing we always do, but more efficiently. Because you can’t buy time, but

you sure can work to manage it.

Many of us discovered in 2020’s time of pandemic shut-downs, how tedious meal planning really is. Then there’s the cooking involved, and the cleanup after. Working smarter not harder can mean assembling batches of meals in storage bags, called meal prepping. Cleaning up? Get paper plates and toss when you’re done.

Also, who in the world can keep up with laundry and picking up after the “not-me” who lives in your house leaves things on tables, floors, in random corners and inside chair cushions?

Another quick answer: Follow FlyLady and adapt some of her principles. Set a timer for 15 minutes and take care of the clutter in a room. Just taking a few minutes to spot-clean can help your whole outlook.

FlyLady says, “You can do anything for 15 minutes.” Police the living room or family room, gather up the empty water bottles, wayward socks, shoes, wrappers and receipts. Put and toss them where they need to be. Do one small load of laundry daily (disclaimer: larger load if you have a family), then take

10 minutes to round up the family to collect what they have that is clean. Hint: If a kid is old enough to work a cell phone, they can put something in a drawer or a basket. Set a timer for them and race to put toys in the box.

Yet another busy-work aspect of life that can be vital to our well-being is dealing with home office paperwork. Open your mail right away when you get home. Take five minutes and rip up the junk mail and put it in recycling. Have a place for your bills. Take another five to 10 minutes and set up payments for the month. If you have a good calendar on your phone, set yourself reminders on when to pay what.

Work can feel like an avalanche and life is made up of a lot of work. But the secret isn’t just working smarter. You can feel all kinds of overwhelmed if the work of life bogs you down.

I’ll leave you with a saying from business guru Simon Sinek:

“Work hard, play hard” sounds terribly unhealthy. I think we would all be a lot healthier, happier and find greater balance in our lives if we learn to work smart and play always.”

Summer Weather Safety

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

By the time this column sees print, school will be out and summer will be here. For most people in the United States, summer brings with it images of fun, fancy, and freedom. However, in the part of Central Texas where I live, summer also brings dangerously hot temperatures and also frequently brings violent storms. So, for those who are new to the area, or who could use a reminder, here are some safety tips courtesy of the American Red Cross.

When it comes to extreme heat safety, they have a primer located at the following link: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/extreme-heat-safety/heat-check.html>. Simply put, while everyone is potentially at risk from extreme heat, certain individuals, such as the elderly, those with heart conditions, and those who lack home air conditioning, are especially vulnerable. This is why it’s important to keep checking in with your family, friends, and

loved ones during periods when the weather gets hot (in this part of Texas, 100 degrees Fahrenheit, 38 Celsius if my math is right, is a normal summer).

You, as an individual, need to remain hydrated, with the recommendation that you drink water (no alcohol, sugary drinks, or caffeine) every 20 minutes. You need to stay indoors as much as possible, especially during the hottest part of the day, and if you do have to go outside wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing made from lightweight materials. If you have no air conditioning indoors, however, then you need to try and find a place that does have air conditioning, such as a public library or an indoor shopping center. And of course, bathing or showing in cool water can help you stay cool.

The link above also has warning signs for a number of heat-related health issues, such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke, as well as proper treatment protocols. I would recom-

end reading those very carefully.

There are several weather-related primers on their website, such as for thunderstorms - <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/thunderstorm.html> - and tornados - <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/tornado.html>. In both instances, it’s vitally important that you don’t wait for any of these to come around before you start preparing. Identify strong, sturdy buildings you can shelter in should a hard thunderstorm or tornado happen; if you don’t live in one, locate the nearest one you can shelter in. Once you do identify a sturdy structure, look for either a basement (rare in this part of Texas) or a small interior room that’s well away from windows. If this basement or room is in your own home, make it a point to gather a supply kit, such as water, first aid supplies, and a battery-operated radio you

can use to get updates as they come. Further, if this is your home, identify anything loose that could blow around and secure it.

From there, pay attention to local news and weather reports. Even if it looks like nothing’s coming, these reports will help you stay vigilant. Not only do many over-the-air broadcast radio stations now do hourly weather reports, you can also purchase dedicated weather radios that listen into the National Weather Service’s broadcast system in case warnings go out.

...And most of all, once that alert sounds, act quickly. Time is of the essence, especially if it’s a tornado. While a “watch” means that weather conditions are ripe for a storm or tornado to happen, a “warning” means that one is on its way and you need to take care now.

As I’ve noted before folks, a little bit of advanced preparation can make all the difference.

Happy Cows and Mad Horses

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Recently I related my limited cattle herding experience atop a horse. I enjoyed working the cows on horseback. It was not hard work, mostly just sitting and enjoying the day. As long as nothing was out of the ordinary it was just a day in the sun perched on a saddle, which are actually fairly comfortable.

At another ranch, a good friend had a deal worked out with one of his neighbors. If my friend, and he worked me into the agreement, worked the normal farm and ranch chores we could ride the owner’s horses, provided we cared for them and stabled them properly.

Now, I had been around horses for quite some time. I often went to a camp when I was younger that had horses as a form of entertainment. I worked with them, and had my own horse. Granted, she was probably elderly in “horse years”, but we got along well. That experience along with my cowpoke horse time led me to believe that horses are fun and a good way to spend a day. Even today I still think that being on horseback is a great way to spend a day and to see the land beneath your feet, or hooves, as the case may be.

I took my friend up on his coop deal with his rancher neighbor. We tended to the normal farm yard chores, cleaning, some fence repair, and a few small tasks. Then we could take off on the horses for the afternoon. Often spending several hours out in the woods, we had a lot of land that we could travel, and as long as we opened and shut gates, we were fine. The horse that I picked seemed like a good choice, of course he had other ideas. I was not that tall (this was before my last growth spurt), and I could handle the saddle but was not equipped for a lot of shenanigans. My horse would let me put the blanket on, but as soon as I got the momentum to sling the

saddle over, he would move slightly causing me to miss and have to try again. When I did get the saddle in place and went to cinch it down, he would puff up so the saddle was not tight. This resulted in me having to get off down the trail a ways and do that part again lest I fall off. Given the small things we hit it off well, this just reinforced my belief that horseback was a good way to see the land.

Often we would spend quite a bit of time out in the woods or just traveling along our trails. Contrary to what you might see in movies, horses are not fond of running full speed, and this is not a very pleasant experience regardless of how comfortable the saddle is otherwise. Most of our days were just wandering along enjoying the sunny days. Most of our trips found us stopping at a watering hole for the horses to drink, and occasionally on warmer days we might enjoy a dip ourselves, cowboy style, which is au naturel.

The high school that I attended had a rodeo club and I was a member. That might seem a bit insignificant, normally, I add that here to preface the next incident. One day we were enjoying a nice peaceful ride when all of a sudden my horse went a bit crazy and started bucking, apparently in an attempt to ditch me. I don’t care how good you are, if the horse wants you off you are coming off at some point. I figure that is why rodeos have an eight second time frame, and honestly that probably seems a lot longer than its face value. I held on for as long as I could, it wasn’t so much me giving up as just the horse wore me down. I came off, hit the ground and bounced up showing my mount that I was not one to be thrown about like a rag doll. Luckily my friend retrieved my horse and soon we were back in the saddle so to speak.

Tick, Tick

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

The tick population is out of control, and I’m not happy about it. In all my decades on this planet, until this year, I’ve found only one tick attached to me—on my arm, and that was back in the 90s. I was wearing my husband’s hunting jacket. I didn’t ask to borrow his jacket after that. But this spring, I’ve been the victim of at least three of the nasty little vampires, and I haven’t even been hunting.

I went online and found an all-natural tick repellent recipe. It’s a spray made from witch hazel, coconut oil, and several essential oils ticks don’t like. It smells great, and I spray it on myself and my dogs each time we go outside. (It only lasts about two hours.) I also sprinkled some salt around the high traffic areas of our yard. Apparently, ticks don’t do well with salt.

Though I have seen some improvement, I still spot the bloodsucking critters here and there. Although they’re not biting me or my dogs, I wish they’d go away. I didn’t invite them onto my property, and it’s rude of them to free-load.

Why do we even have ticks? I mean, when Noah

brought the animals onto the ark, did he really build a tiny stall for the bloodsuckers? Did they hitch a ride on the squirrels? These are my questions, and I want answers. I went to the most easy-access source I know (Google) and asked about the benefits of ticks. Surely, they’re good for something.

According to TickSafety.com, based in Loudoun County, Virginia, they do serve several purposes, though I can think of more attractive options for each one listed. But since God didn’t consult me when He created the bug kingdom, I guess I’ll have to tolerate them. Here are a few things ticks are (apparently) good for:

They provide food for birds. I’m okay with that, since I enjoy the birds in my yard. They also feed snakes and opossums. I’m not okay with that.

They help measure the health of the local ecosystem. Too many ticks mean fewer birds. Too few ticks may indicate a growth in the snake population.

They improve diversity of life, since they carry a variety of bacteria and microorganisms. (I don’t see how this

is a good thing, but I’m not a scientist.)

They help control animal populations by making the weaker animals sick, so they’ll die off quicker. (Morbid. I don’t like it.)

So there you have it. I’ve tried my best to keep an open mind about ticks, but apparently, I’m a tick misanthrope. (I’ve wanted to use that word for a while now. It just means a hater, for those of you who don’t want to look it up.)

I’ll keep trying to send them on their way. In the meantime, I’ve decided to respond to them as I would a barking chihuahua. They’re annoying, but if they keep their distance, I’ll ignore them. In the meantime, my dogs and I will enjoy the fresh scent of eucalyptus oil, peppermint, and lemongrass.

“And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” Genesis 1:31



Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

June

- 06/08: Bookworms
- 06/09: Singing Bluebonnets
- 06/11: Mexican Train Dominoes, Couples Night Out
- 06/15: Snack Time Mah Jong, Bunco
- 06/17: Popcorn Bridge

To join or for more information, please call:
Mary Pringle (760)265-5035 or
email at: pringlem@msn.com
Visit the website:
www.bellcountynewcomers.com



Bell County Master Gardener - June 3

Learn how to choose the right houseplants and care for them with confidence. Master Gardener Ashley Burnley will cover essential skills such as watering, soil selection, troubleshooting common issues, and simple propagation techniques to help both beginners and plant enthusiasts keep their plants healthy and thriving. June 3, 6:00 p.m. at SMART Museum 408 N 10th St, Nolanville, Tx. Register at txmg.org/bell/.

Wilhite Family Reunion - June 6

The descendants and families of George Albert Wilhite and Frances Jane Martin Wilhite will hold a family reunion from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m, Saturday, June 6, at the Belton Church of Christ, 3003 N. Main St. in Belton. Attendees are asked to bring a covered dish for lunch. For more information call Cindy Bounds Gilleland at 254-939-6761.

NAMI - June 9

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, June 9th and June 23rd at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

1st Annual Juneteenth parade Celebration & Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageant - June 19

We are making HISTORY in Belton, Texas with the 1st Annual Juneteenth parade Celebration & Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageant! This event is about honoring the TRUE meaning of Juneteenth—celebrating freedom, culture, and the strength of our community. In a city where this history has not always been fully recognized, we are creating a space to uplift, educate, and celebrate together. We need your support!
 We are currently seeking:Parade entries (organizations, schools, dance teams, car clubs, etc.),Vendors (food trucks, small businesses, artisans, nonprofits), Pageant participants for the Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Program, and Sponsors & community partners. Let's come together to rebuild, support Black-owned businesses, and create something powerful for future generations. For registration and inquiries call 254-534-2225.

1976 Class Reunion - June 27

Join your classmates on June 27, 2026, 6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at The singing Coyote Farm, 6841 West FM 436, Belton for an evening of Fun, Fellowship, and Fireworks.

Temple-Belton Ladies Lion Club Meeting Second and Fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Belton V.F.W., 2311 S. Pearl St., Belton.

Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-North) meets at CTCOG, 2180 N. Main St, Belton on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. All are welcome, and there is no membership cost. The Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-West) meets at St. Andrews United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 206 W Fowler Ave, Killeen on the 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. For more information contact Gayle Shull at GayleIn-Belton@gmail.com or (254) 718-4197.

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each month at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mc11249tx.com for more information.

Aspen Hospice and Palliative Care Volunteers Needed Listed here are many ways you can help make a difference for our hospice patients. You can provide companionship, listen to music, read, reminisce, play games, cards, checkers, paint nails, apply makeup, curl hair or take them on walks. Please visit aspenhealthcare.net or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

Young's Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer's Care-giver Support Group occurs weekly on Fridays from 6-7 p.m. This group allows your loved ones to join. Loved ones will be doing activities while the group of caregivers are joining together to better understand and learn tips and tricks for daily life. Young's Daughters Funeral and Bereavement Center is located at 4235 East Hwy 190 in Temple.

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or

for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

The Bell County Genealogical Society meets the fourth Saturday of each month. The group offers free Genealogy Guidance. Members of the Bell County Genealogical Society will be present to help those with questions about researching their family trees. General meetings are held in Temple, Belton, Killeen, and Salado on a rotating basis. All meetings are open to the public. You do not have to be from Bell County or have ancestors from Bell County to participate. For locations and time of meetings visit our website at <https://txbegs.org/home/events/>

Pistons on the Creek will meet every third Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Come down to Nolan Creek and show off your rides. From classic to modern, muscle, rat rod, exotic, all automotive enthusiasts are welcome. Support our awesome downtown businesses and restaurants surrounded by live music, food, drinks and a great atmosphere.

Bell Fine Arts Visitors welcome Wednesday's from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 306 E 5th Ave in Belton. If you have a desire to meet, learn, and work together with those of similar interests or just curious, come visit with us and see what we are about. Mah Jong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611 or just come by.

Local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America meets from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Lena Armstrong Public Library, 301 E. First St., in Belton. The group is open to anyone interested in crochet. All skill levels are welcome. For information email Betty Reichert at bettyreichert@yahoo.com or Kathy Bement at katshookandneedle@gmail.com. Anyone interested in joining the local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America will also need to join the National Crochet Guild of America. Visit www.crochet.org for details.

Bell County Texas Democratic Women holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

Leadership Belton is an excellent source for learning leadership skills. This 10-month program focuses on three key elements: community awareness training, leadership training, and team building. Do you have someone ready to take the next step to become a leader? If so, Leadership Belton is here to make that difference. For more information on how to participate, contact the chamber at 254-939-3551 or e-mail at info@beltonchamber.com.

Engage & Empower with BISSD Belton ISD believes the learning experiences of our students are enhanced through the engagement of our community. We invite parents and community members to get involved in our schools. Register as a volunteer with our new volunteer and partnership system at the following link: https://beltonisd.ez-communicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login_form.aspx?app=0.

Community Information

TAKE ME HOME PROGRAM The Belton Police Department is adopting the Take Me Home Program, aimed at helping individuals who need special assistance to return safely home after getting lost. The program is a database with photos and personal information to help police officers find someone who is lost or wandered away from home. Take Me Home is designed for individuals who may need additional aid including those with Dementia, Autism or specific mental health needs. It's free to register someone and the data is kept confidential to first responders. You can sign up a loved one here: www.beltontexas.gov/take-mehome. Read more about the program here: https://www.beltontexas.gov/news_detail_T11_R1166.php.



Dial 988 for Mental Health Emergencies To help those contemplating suicide, press option 1 for assistance with military/veteran population.

Text-to-911 for speech/ hearing impaired, those unable to call or speak due to home invasion, abduction or domestic violence or physically incapable. Providing location, city name and nature of the emergency in the first message is imperative. For further education on this service, don't hesitate to call 254-933-5500.

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS) are extra eyes and ears while in areas where large groups may gather. Contact the Belton Police Dept. to join.

Belton Citizens Police Academy meets Thursday nights to enhance police and community partnerships. Apply online to be a part of this exciting program.

Slam the Scam Throughout the year, we give you the tools to recognize scams and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information. Share the information with your loved ones & Slam the Scam! Visit ssa.gov/scam for tips.

Dementia/Alzheimers Support Group- Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center, 4235 E. US HWY 190 in Temple. Fridays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Join us for activities while caregivers discuss and help each other during this difficult time. Call Sabrina at 254-401-1302

STAY CONNECTED: STAY INFORMED

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Courtesy Photo

A bench was dedicated to the Peeples family of Belton earlier this spring. The bench is located outside the Lena Armstrong Public Library. The bench was fabricated by Noblewins, which repurposes wind turbine components into public installations. Leon Peeples (1914–1994) moved to Belton as a child and later worked as a grocery deliverer and manager of the Beltonian Theatre. Jennie Peeples (1914–2000) came to Belton to attend University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and worked as a public school teacher and artist. The couple married in 1937 and operated Peeples Sales Company for nearly 40 years. The Peeples family has longstanding ties to the community. Leon's sister, Berneta Peeples, lived in Belton for more than a century and worked at the Belton Journal for over 70 years while volunteering with local organizations, including the library.



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